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CANADIAN CANTICLES

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[a collection of 136 poems]

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I

SONGS OF THE DAY

Her Flag

HER country stretches wide and free,
Beloved of all the world;
On city street and hill and dale
Her banner is unfurled;
The light of heaven streams on her,
From pole to coral reef;
And no man dare her wrath incur,
Her flag the Maple Leaf.

Intelligence dwells in her land,
Sweet Industry ne'er tires,
Integrity rings golden bells
From out her thousand spires;
The strangers flock within her gates
And gladly pay her fief,
The blessed land of Canada,
Her flag the Maple Leaf.

Silver and gold are in her hold,
Her coffers never lack;
Her sons are valiant to defend,
Whene'er her foes attack;

And far and wide on every side
There waves the golden sheaf;
God bless the land of Canada,
Her flag the Maple Leaf!

The Nine

THROUGH forests primeval
Where swift torrents rush,
Babbling loudly, their voices
Dispersing the hush

Of silence that drapes
Agèd trees, like the pall
Of oblivion which hangs
O'er deserted old hall;

Through wild trackless waters
Where lurketh the night;
O'er silver-starred pathway
Where reigneth the light;

Where wild doves are nesting,
Where butterflies flock;
Where the strong winds of heaven
The little leaves rock;

Where sunbeams are bending
To kiss opening flowers;
Where gold is descending
From the hands of the hours;

Where silver-tongued rivers
Lead golden-voiced birds;
Late afternoon shadows
Soothe fleecy white herds;

Where zephyrs are calling
To whispering sheaves;
Where sweet rain is falling
On crimson-clad leaves;

Where cloth-of-gold lieth
In state on the hills;
Where moonbeams meander
On quivering rills;

Where heavenly ermine
All glittering shines;
Where jewelled crowns encircle
The brows of the pines;

Through fire's scorching cavern,
Through solitude's gloom;
Past the glories of life
And the mists of the tomb;

Through the curtain of darkness,
In beauty divine,—
They follow their leader,
The wonderful nine.

The God of Colour

THE summer days were nearly o'er,
The world was growing duller,
When through the woods there roamed by chance
One night the god of colour.

He set a glowing palette full,
And seized some reeds for brushes,
And soon beneath his skilful touch
The fading maple blushes.

Old trees look young and fresh again
In brown tints soft and mellow;
The oak discards her dust-worn gown
To don a garb of yellow.

He scatters colours on the grass,
The world grows gay and gladder;
He paints the flowers with amethyst,
The evening sky with madder.

The summer days were nearly o'er,
The world was growing duller;
He's filled it with a fresh delight,
This little god of colour.

Their Maker

THE constellations of the heavens knew Him,
Stars heralded His birth;
To meet His needs, the grain, the grape, the olive
Sprang upward from the earth.

Fish from the sea rose at their Maker's bidding
To float into the net;
The waters made a pathway for His footsteps
Whose Hand their boundary set.

The dewdrops hastened from the sky to bathe Him,
The soft winds brushed His hair,
The wild trees sheltered Him in tribulation
And listened to His prayer.

The round world trembled at His cry of anguish,
The daylight faded dim,
The darkness shrouded Him as with a curtain,
The sun went blind for Him.

The Call of the River

LOUDER than whirr of factory
Above the city's hum,
I hear the river calling me
With rippling voice to come.

It bids me leave the haunt of man,
The squalor, dust, and din,
The cry of pain, the lust of gain,
The misery and sin.

Through shine or gloom, above the loom,
It calls for evermore,
And lures me like a siren sweet
With music to its shore.

Opportunity

SHE sits spinning, spinning, spinning,
With her distaff in her hand,
Offering skeins of golden treasure
To all those who near her stand.

She finds her own material,
She knows not any law;
She spins minutes into fortunes,
And pure gold out of straw.

She's keen of sight and very wise,
  Swift-footed as the wind;
She wears a hood upon her head
  And never looks behind.

She's clad in sombre garments,
  But her arms with gems are twined;
She is shod with velvet slippers,
  And is sometimes hard to find.

The whole long day she sits and spins
  Her lovely golden strands,
And holds them out to every one,
  With little jewelled hands.

For ever fresh and beautiful,
  Her charms all men entice;
She never will repeat her gifts
  Nor spin a pattern twice.

Niagara Falls

O MIGHTY stream! O beauteous Fall!
  Thy shivering, quivering spray
Reflects the rainbows on the sea
  Of azure far away.

The spirits of a thousand years
  Encamp within thy caves,
While on and o'er for evermore
  Unending pour thy waves.

A magic breath, a dirge of death,
  Thy mystic vapours fling
A funeral pall, O mighty Fall!
  O glittering, regal thing!

Zephyrs caress with tenderness,
  Thy silver drapery twist,
Where emeralds twine and opals shine,
  Diamond and amethyst.

The Irish Emigrant

I'M lonesome for ye, Norah darling,
  On Canada's fair shore;
I've hung my harp upon the willow,
  I play on it no more.

It is a bonnie country, Norah,
  Where man's a chance to rise,
Where skies are blue, my own sweet darling,
  The colour of your eyes.

I've built a cottage for ye, Norah,
With roses at the door,
A fireplace and a china-cupboard,
A garden plot before.

I've hung my harp upon the willow,
I will not need it more
Until I see you, Norah darling,
A-standing at the door.

The ocean rolls so wide between us,
Dear Ireland is so far;
Oh, come to me quick, Norah darling!
For home is where you are.

Hours

FOUR-AND-TWENTY heralds go
Across the fields of light;
Twelve are in black with sable plumes,
And twelve in flowing white.

Twelve mount on steeds of ebony
In towns where no man stirs;
Twelve of them snow-white palfreys ride
And wear their golden spurs.

Twelve of them run from East to West,
And twelve from West to East,
To bid the earth's inhabitants
To mourning, rest, or feast.

No swords clang as they swiftly ride,
Their largess wide they fling—
They carry gifts to every one,
These heralds of a King.

Sunlight

SHE is full of grace,
She is clothed with light,
She steals to me
From the arms of night.

Her glittering robe
Outshines the stars;
She locks up darkness,
The light unbars.

She has hair of gold,
With amber eyes;
A wealth of love
In her sweet face lies.

She dances about
  In her yellow shoes,
And laughs with glee
  As her gifts diffuse.

She has gathered store
  From dim vaults of old;
Her hands are full,
  Dripping full of gold.

She hastens away
  When her work is done
By a golden staircase
  To the sun.

The Spirit of the Ocean

SHE dwells afar where the waters lave
  The coral walls of some ocean cave,
Where the sea-nymphs dance on a deep green
  wave;

Where for evermore the billows roar
In majesty at her rockbound door,
Or in fury break on her sanded floor.

She stealeth out in the dead of night,
Her tresses flowing and robed in light,
To walk on the wild waves, foaming white.

She rocks the ships, as a weary child
Is rocked by its mother to slumber mild,
Crooning her lullabies weird and wild.

She patrols the ocean a watch to keep,
Sings a funeral dirge over all who sleep,
And laps them to rest in her graveyard deep.

She dwells with her mermaids fair and brave,
In some cloistered spot where the waters lave
The coral walls of an ocean cave.

The Heart of the Woods

IN the heart of the woods there is rest and peace—
No noise, nor toil, nor strife;
Just the soothing touch of a Hand divine,
Afar from the marts of life;
Where, washed from the dust of care, and clothed
In the mood of the forest trees,
We sing with nature a glad refrain,
To the tune of the summer breeze.

In the heart of the woods we lay aside
Our burdens of life awhile,
To gather up flowers of joy, and learn
Of childhood's mind, to smile;

There every tree has its gilead balm
For woes, or doubts, or moods,
And the heart of man feels the heart of God
In the spirit of the woods.

Euterpe

HER eyes are full of laughter,
Her hair is of spun gold,
And all men follow after
As they have done of old.

Where'er her footstep tarries
The sweetest songs are born,
And everywhere she carries
New joys to the forlorn.

The hearts of all she knoweth
Throughout her favoured land,
And wheresoe'er she goeth
Her harp is in her hand.

Her heart is full of laughter,
Her hair is of spun gold,
And all men follow after
As they have done of old.

The Portrait

STATELY, in velvet and silk,
Furs and priceless old lace,
With skin as soft as milk
And a pure Madonna face;

Beautiful, tender, good,
Full of a latent power
In her maidenhood's fresh young bloom,
Like some rare, sweet, opening flower;

Through the curtained door a girl,
Whose fair plaits crowned her head,
Came shyly in and paused;
"My model," the artist said.

Surprised, I saw her stand
Without velvet or silk or fur;
But I knew that the artist's soul
Had painted the soul of her.

Canada

THE country of a thousand isles,
Of zephyrs sweet and cool;
Where mirrors daily show God's smiles,
There's many a fern-girt pool;

Where there are miles of vast seashore
  Where the wild waves sing their prayers,
And houses built with open doors
  To all who climb their stairs;

Where health and wealth and hope abound,
  Where gold waves in the breeze;
Where rivers hasten with sweet sound
  To join the inland seas;

A land where thundering waters speak,
  Where shoals and shallows play;
Where rainbows dance at hide-and-seek
  In showers of glittering spray;

Where mountains tower toward the skies
  To circle her with love;
Where lofty pine cathedrals rise
  Whose spires point above;

Where freedom's banner is unfurled,
  Riches from sea to sea,—
The grandest land of all the world
  Is Canada the free.

Future Years

THROUGH a dense wood they lure me ever onward,
They beckon unto me;
I cannot tell if there be few or many
All clothed in mystery;
For ever they go dancing on before me,
Still beckoning unto me.

Sylph-like and sweet, with airy fairy graces
Seen only as in dreams,
Like silent sirens dancing with veiled faces
Where firelight gleams;
On through the wood they lead, o'er fragrant blossoms,
By silver streams.

Leaves

THEY are dancing in the sunshine,
They are dancing in the wind,
With their red and yellow dresses
Gaily flying out behind.

They are twirling in the sunshine,
The whole air with joy is rife;
They are dancing, gaily dancing,
From the very love of life.

They are waltzing to the music
Of Euterpe with her lute;
They are dancing to the wild strains
Pan is playing on his flute.

They are dancing in the sunshine,
They are dancing in the wind,
With their red and yellow dresses
Gaily trailing out behind.

Empire Song

WE are marching down the ages in the glory of the Lord,
His Cross shall be our banner, and His Holy Word our sword,
With honour in our vanguard, all fear behind us cast,
To the glory of the future; in the memory of the past.

Chorus:

We are marching down the ages in the glory of the Lord,
His Cross shall be our banner, and His Holy Word our sword,
As we go marching on.

We are marching down the ages in the glory of the Lord,
Prosperity and unity our aim and our reward;
The rights which we have fought for we never more will yield,
The truth shall be our buckler and righteousness our shield.

In the glory of our fathers who were born across the sea,
We are marching to the music of the bells of liberty;
Secure in peace and plenty or led on by martial drum,
We are marching down the ages to the better days to come.

The Spirit of the Pines

A CHARM pervades her dwelling
Like blessing from on high;
She soothes her weary children
With an ancient lullaby.

There's healing in her presence,
Her voice like music peals,
From her soft shadowy garments
A faint sweet fragrance steals.

Her dark hair like a halo
Surrounds a face divine;
From her dreamy eyes of splendour
Maternal welcomes shine.

She unbinds care's clothes that cumber,
Bathes in the stream of peace,
Brings forth the robe of slumber,
The pillows of release.

Kind and comely she sits watching,
With the lovelight in her eyes,
A-rocking of the cradle
And crooning lullabies.

The Spider

SHE spins so patiently her silver web
From tree to tree,
As fair Arachne wove her coloured strands,
So cunningly.

Methinks the daring soul and pride,
The power and skill
Of that famed ancestor of hers
Bide in her still.

She dreams of lands and days of old
When men were kings,
And women goddesses
With crowns and wings;

Of glitter, royal pomp,
And clanging swords,
When tapestries were woven
For the gods.

And as the eons flow in space,
The seasons ebb,
She spins and hangs on common things
Her silver web.

The Old House

THE old lawn, the old trees,
That years have left behind,
The garden all abloom with flowers,
I often see in mind.

The jessamine and columbine
Their graceful tendrils flung
Around the old verandah post,
Where the robins raised their young.

The old house in tottering age,
  Grown grey with family cares,
Ghosts gather round thy hearth at night,
  Walk up and down the stairs.

Time unlocks treasure-vaults to those
  Whose right it is to come;
But to the curious stranger
  The dear old walls stand dumb.

And down the empty fireplaces
  The east wind makes its moan:
Come out and softly close the door,
  Leave the old house alone.

The Gold God

AN autocratic, cruel, cold god,
  Before him thousands bow;
His courtiers, a glittering throng,
  To him allegiance vow.

His brood of ill-begotten sons,
  Pride, Plunder, Vice, and Shame,
Crime, Sickness, Misery, Poverty,
  Are fighting for his fame.

His banner floateth everywhere,
All creeds his mandates feel,
Crowds hasten with oblations sweet,
In servile worship kneel.

And on his stately altar, Earth
Her daily tribute flings;
He tramples ruthlessly upon
Her tender helpless things.

His sceptre reaches o'er the world,
His heralds run afar;
He crushes out the souls of men
'Neath his triumphal car.

Dying Fields

THE wind is tolling dolefully
A funeral knell
Through the dim belfry of the trees,
Like some weird bell.

The bushes bare, bowed down with grief,
Look gaunt and old;
The fields that throbbed with golden life
Lie still and cold.

Wrapped in white fleecy shroud they lie,
So chill and numb;
Birds sing not, and the rippling rills
Are stricken dumb.

The wind rings on, the song of death
It pours aloud;
The fields lie buried, and the skies
Have made their shroud.

The Death of Yesterday

WAN and chill, without cry or warning,
Her spirit fled, like a passing cloud,
To another world, at the dawn of morning,
And she lies wrapped in her misty shroud.

But e'er she went where no time they measure,
To be laid in the grave of the past away,
She gave to the children of men a treasure
In the birth of her infant child, To-day.

Haw Berries

DROPS of blood by summer shed
As her life strength ebbed away;
And with crown-beshriven head,
Numbered with the dead, she lay.

Corals from some ocean isle
  Sea-nymphs here have brought to deck
Autumn, just to see her smile
  As she hangs them on her neck.

Country-born

IN the dust of the crowded city,
  O'er the squalor and loud-voiced words,
He lingers in infinite pity,
  Recalling the songs of the birds.

And e'en through the noise of the traffic
  He catches the sweet mystic trill
Of the silvery speech of the river
  As it ripples along toward the mill.

In spite of the rough tones about him,
  Above all the din of the loom,
He lists to the lowing of cattle
  And gathers the violets abloom.

His dreams are of wealth of sweet roses,
  As he treads on the narrow street;
Or of searching for nuts or posies,
  Or wandering 'mid golden wheat.

An alien who's bartered his birthright
For the city smoke and gloom;
But his spirit dwells in the homeland,
Though his hands may toil at the loom.

He Went into the Fields

MY Master went into the fields
To ease Him of His pain;
My Master went into the fields,
The golden fields of grain,
To pray awhile in solitude,
E'er came His load again.

My Master went into the fields
To cast aside His care,
Among the lilies of the fields,
The wild birds of the air;
My Master went into the fields
To meet His Father there.

Lilies

'NEATH the wind's breath they quiver,
My lilies of delight
Fresh from the sparkling river,
Dear maidens robed in white,

All fealty demanding
  Like virgins pure and fair,
With fragrance in the handling
  And gold glints in their hair.

They float upon the waters
  While light glows in the skies;
At eventide, sweet daughters,
  They close their night-kissed eyes.

'Neath the wind's touch they quiver,
  Those lilies of delight
My Love brought from the river
  And gave to me last night.

A Fleeting Vision

IN spite of trailing gown and stately coiffure,
  Silk, chiffon, tinkling things,
Laughter, small talk, and gauzy fan and perfume,
  Bracelets and finger-rings,

Film of art, with dressmaker's deception,
  And all convention's lies—
I saw your soul for one brief fleeting moment
  Through your uncurtained eyes.

I saw, and know beyond all controversy,
That it is pure and free
As a white daisy blooming in the sunshine,
A gull upon the sea.

As sometimes in a streamlet in the valley
We see the sky-clouds roll,
Across a stately flower-decked dining-table
I saw a human soul.

Life and Death

I SAW through an open door in a house most fair;
Youth, love, warmth, happiness, friendship, and hope dwell there.
The rooms were fragrant, hung with trappings rich and old,
Of art and intellect, silver and gems and gold:
And when each guest arose, his hour of sojourn o'er,
A sable-clad attendant oped for him the fair, closed door.

Then through this open door ('twas quickly closed again,
For in the narrow hall there was not space for twain),

I saw rooms fairer still, more spacious: glories gleamed
Brighter than I had seen, grander than I had dreamed.
So now I grieve no more whatever may betide;
When one door shuts at last, the other opens wide.

The Soul

(*From Wagner's "The Flying Dutchman"*)

FOR ever and for ever onward driven,
No port in sight; but yet
She drifts across the trackless seething ocean
With blood-red sails all set.

No rest from the eternal restless water,
Nor harbour at any dock,
Imperishable derelict, immortal,
Though torn on many a rock.

No helm and no steersman and no cargo,
Nor gleaming starboard light;
Her crew of phantom sailors weird and silent,
All other ships affright.

Year after year, with never-ceasing motion,
She wanders on her way,
Tossed on the bosom of the surging ocean
The livelong night and day.

The lurid lightning flashes through the heavens,
The billows roar and fret;
The ghostly vessel travels ever onward
Her blood-red sails all set.

No death awaits her in the waves' embraces,
Nor tempest from above;
No resting-place, no hope, and no deliverance,
Save in redeeming love.

The Muses

WITH the refulgence from Olympic altars
Their faces shine;
On air they float in trailing vestal garments,
The mystic nine.

O'er silver-flowered fields and pearly mountains
They wend their way;
On Helicon they drink of starry fountains
By night and day.

Sweet fragrance issues from their flowing raiment;
The deepest gloom
Flees like a phantom at the sun's appearing
To its dark tomb.

With harps and songs, hands laden with treasure,
With joy for night,
With jewel-crowned brow, light feet that dance a measure
Of keen delight;

With mirth and feasting, love and life and laughter,
Sweet dreamy eyes,—
To touch their garments all men follow after
To make them wise.

Goddesses in white mantles, evanescent,
With fire divine,
Apollo's spirit-choir, immortal maidens,
The mystic nine.

Yesterday

WE lean upon the high rail fence
Through which we may not stray,
And cast our longing eyes across
The field of yesterday.

The long grass seemed not half so sweet
When we through it went plodding;
We did not see the blue cornflowers,
Daisies, and poppies nodding.

The birds' song trilled upon the air,
Rich perfume to us floated;
But all the beauty of that field
We felt we never noted.

Love sauntered through the turnstile too,
To bear us company;
On bread of life and wine of joy
We feasted there care-free.

The distant fields before us lie,
Our path winds on its way;
But evermore we stand and sigh
For the field of yesterday.

Barabbas

FREE!—free as the air!
From his hot prison bars
Thrust out 'neath the light
Of the glittering stars;

When the faint silver beams
  Of the moon had scarce gone
From the field where the sun
  In his chariot shone.

Free from whence Law
  Its anathemas hurled
Down on the Life and the Light
  Of the World.

Robber and murderer
  Sentenced to death,
Loosed from his shackles
  To draw freedom's breath;

Once more to roam
  With companions to tryst,
Free in the stead
  Of the crucified Christ.

Free from whence Law
  Its atrocities hurled—
Felt he a thrill
  From that Heart of the World?

The Meed of Love

MY heart is glad—not of wide lands and houses,
Of grand ancestral name,
Vast wealth and all the gifts which pride arouses,
Great learning or earned fame;

My heart is glad—not of earth's fleeting pleasure
That every hour allures,
The rain and shine, the flowers and fruit and treasure,—
But just because I'm yours.

Perchance the meed of love may still be sorrow,
And I may wake to weep;
I would not give to-day for one to-morrow,
My virgin heart to keep.

Grief always comes united to a blessing,
And losses follow gain;
Whatever in this world is worth possessing
Is also worth the pain.

The Soul Market

NOTE the glitter and the glamour,
Hark how gold and silver rolls,
Where the Devil's emissary's
Buying souls—human souls.

Satyrs grimly dance behind him,
Gay sirens call aloud ;
The wrapper of each purchase
Is a shroud—is a shroud.

Mark the rushing and the crushing
Of the poor misguided fools,
Heeding not the whirring, stirring,
Of the bats and lurking ghouls

Who are waiting in the belfry
Till their hour the great bell tolls,
Swooping down to take possession
Of the souls—the lost souls.

The City of the Sea

THERE is a city where the wild waves swirl
Tempestuously, ceaselessly, against the pearl
And coral houses, where the mermaids rest
Nestled in the shelter of the ocean's breast.

There, in that city of the sanded street
Which echoes to the music of light tripping feet,
Rise wondrous palaces and crystal bowers,
Wide rocky gardens all ablaze with flowers,

Where the sea-nymphs sing to emerald lyres
And the hours chime out from sapphire spires,
While the soft white clouds of fleecy foam
Float in the azure above their home.

They live and love, they toil and sleep
Cradled in the strong arms of the great blue deep;
And when they die, the seaweeds wave
Fair, feathery plumes o'er their rock-hewn grave.

Time

THE oldest of all gravediggers,
He merrily sings and delves;
Some bodies he tucks in a blanket of dust,
And some on his cold vault-shelves.

Come young or aged, he buries them deep,
He hides them all away;
He digs by light and he digs by night,
But he buries them all some day.

The years will send them their thousand dead
As the years have done of old;
And he drops his dead in a narrow bed
And lays them away to mould.

He laughs at all other sextons
Whom Death has bound to toil
As he covers his graves, and plants his flowers
On the rich and fertile soil.

The oldest of all gravediggers,
Always at work and gay,
For well he knows, whoever goes
Must surely come his way.

Disguised Blessings

IF we could see beyond the cares oppressing,
We'd find the very gifts we daily crave;
The heaven-sent cross oft brings an earthly blessing,
Sweet joys arise to bloom on sorrow's grave.

Beneath our bitter anguish lies the treasure
We've long years sought, in many ways, in vain;
Our pain is oft the harbinger of pleasure,
Our losses sometimes prove our truest gain.

Then perish doubt, and hushed be sad complaining;
For mortal faith is frail and sight is dim;
There's One who rules our lives with love constraining;
Be still and murmur not, but trust in Him.

Christ

ALONE, despised, forsaken by His brethren,
Misunderstood,
Rejected by His people and His city,
He went into the wood.

The strong trees stretched their arms to give Him shelter
And soothe His troubled mood;
Their great hearts yielded Him their fragrant presence
Alone within the wood.

Alone, in agony forsworn, forsaken,
Despised, misunderstood,
He left the haunts of man and man's creation,
To go into the wood.

Isaiah xxxvi. 16

" Drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern."

WHY should I travel the same quiet road
That men journey on day after day ?
There is nothing new for us unless we will seek
To tread on an untrodden way.

Why should I dig deep where my brother has delved,
And chop where he chopped in the wood ?
Reap the fruit of his labour and drink from his well,
When there's many another as good ?

Each should plant his own vineyard, and drink his own wine
And gather to garner or sell,
Dig deep his own cistern and quench his life-thirst
With clear water from out his own well.

Man's Gift

HE had no home at whose command the earth
Sprang from the womb of chaos into birth.

He treasures hid in deep dark vaults of old,
But had no gems, no silver and no gold.

He made the fruits, the seed of yellow wheat,
Toiled as a craftsman for the food to eat.

He planted trees in forests vast and dim;
The doors made of their woods were closed to
Him.

He painted flowers to sweeten earth's fair morns;
Men gathered blossoms, offered Him the thorns.

All, all His gifts from hill to sun-kissed moss;
The only thing men gave Him was a Cross.

Love

SO dearly do I love thee, dear,
That were my soul from earth set free,
This warm clay lying still and drear,
Would swift arise at word from thee.

Nor grave so deep, nor death so cold,
Could separate us long, I ween,
Thine image in mine heart would hold
Mine eyes from heaven's glorious sheen.

Yea, even in that land of bliss,
  Empty would seem its joy and fame,
Until I felt again thy kiss,
  And heard the angels call thy name.

The Ghost of Poverty

WITH white wan visage, cold red hands,
  With vision blurred and failing,
A long procession in his wake
  Of little children wailing;

Mothers with heavy-lidded eyes
  Withheld by tears from sleeping,
Women with toil grown old and worn,
  And pretty damsels weeping.

His garments soiled and tattered hang
  Upon his gaunt frame shrunken;
Bent back, bowed head, down at the heel,
  He staggers like one drunken.

His gifts are penury and crime,
  Unsought-for, bitter leisure,
Thirst, hunger, weariness, and cold
  In full and pressed-down measure.

My First Love

I LEFT my first love, Innocence,
To seek the home of Shame,
The filth of her foul dwelling-place
Besmirched my once fair fame.

I felt her yoke grow heavier,
Her pleasures daily pall;
Her presence satiated me,
Her sweetmeats turned to gall.

I rose and sought my manhood's garb,
I left her board and bed,
To seek my first love, Innocence,
But found that she was dead.

The Sea Shepherd

I LIE upon the golden sands and watch
The shepherd of the seas
Tending his flock upon the azure field
Under the grey cloud trees.

Hither and thither, gambolling all the day
In search of pastures new,
His crook a trident, still he leads them forth
Across the field of blue.

The hours haste on, a soft sweet mist descends,
Young zephyrs call and scold;
But as he took them to the shining fields
He brings them to the fold.

Lake Ontario

ONTARIO, Ontario,
Thy water rolls as blue
As when thou tossed upon thy breast
The Indian's birch canoe.

Heathen orgies and the war-whoop
Echo round thy shores no more,
Yet thy waves roll on untiring,
Majestic as of yore.

Cities thrive where once the forest
Was the home of wolf and bear;
On the site of Indian wigwam
Culture's built creations fair.

Where in primal days the wavelets
Kissed in solitude thy beach,
Where the lonely maples whispered,
Arts and sciences now reach.

Ontario, Ontario,
  Thy water rolls as blue
As in the days thy bosom bore
  The Indian's birch canoe.

Roll on through future centuries
  As in the past, thy fame;
We heirs of the Dominion
  Love thy beauty and thy name.

Three Friends

I SOUGHT a lovely figure, young and fair,
  I scarce had seen her, she went by so fast,
Now I bemoaned my carelessness and wept,
  She'd vanished like a phantom, gone—my Past;
The while I strewed flowers sadly on my dead,
Another form drew near and softly said:

"Weep not for what is gone, my friend, but turn
  To the rich blessing that awaits you now,
Your Past is dead, but I, your Present, live
  To comfort you, with laurels crown your brow;
Be up and grasp me, never idly yearn
For visions that to dust and ashes turn."

As she thus spoke, her fingers pointed on
To where a shadow issued from the wood,
Clad in a garb of mist and glamour, with
Arms full of flowers, down dropping as she stood;
The Future beckoned me with outstretched hand
To step into a new enchanted land.

Childhood

WHERE did she lose it? Down in the meadow—
Down in the meadow raking hay?
She was a gay child yester-morning
In the little meadow beside the bay.

Her eyes are blue as the bluest cornflower,
Her laughter ripples out glad and gay,
Her hair is gold in the summer sunshine,
She's frolicsome as a lamb at play.

Where did she lose it? Down in the meadow—
Down in the meadow raking hay?
She was a gay child yester-morning,
She is a woman grown to-day.

Eros

THY birth was in some star above within
God's golden portal,
Thy mother was Eternity, thy life and youth
immortal,
Thy cradle was the crescent moon, the angels
smoothed thy pillow,
Thou playedst upon the rainbow bridge and
danced upon the billow.

The stars sang in the universe before thee at thy
going,
And wheresoe'er thy footstep touched, rich flowers
and fruits sprang growing;
Thou broughtest earth sweet gifts of love with
throbs of bitter anguish,
But many waters cannot drown nor mighty
warriors vanquish.

Thy sceptre reaches everywhere from earth to
heaven's shore,
Thou wast before the world began, thou wilt be
evermore;
Thy voice of melody prevails above the burial
hymn,
Thou livest long as God Himself or holy seraphim.

My Cinderella

WHEN I want to find a princess
For my castle in the air,
I will not go to seek for her
Among the rich and fair.

I want her kind and beautiful,
I know she must be brave,
For only those are conquerors
Who early learn to slave.

I want a clean-swept, garnished heart,
A tender, skilful hand;
And only those who can obey
Are fit to bear command.

So when I want to find her
For my castle in the air,
I will not go to look for her
Where none aspire or dare—

Among the giddy-pated,
The idlers of the earth;
But I'll find my Cinderella
By the ashes of some hearth.

Venice

VENICE, city of my heart,
Venice, queen of southern skies,
Lofty palaces of art
In eternal grandeur rise;
Wrapped in ancient majesty,
Silent city of the sea.

Placid, glittering highways wind
All around thy stately halls,
Din and dust-clouds left behind,
O'er each age thy spell enthralls;
Peaceful in antiquity,
Silent city of the sea.

Bathed in glowing, glimmering lights,
With a glory all thine own,
Beauteous in thy days and nights,
Dwelling like a queen alone;
Dreaming on in majesty,
Silent city of the sea.

A Cross

I FOUND on the pathway by which I must travel
Erected a cross;
I could only avoid it or journey around it
With infinite loss.

But as I became to its presence accustomed
Through many dark hours,
I learned that, though stony, it often was fragrant
And covered with flowers.

There, under the blossoms, were footholds deep chiselled,
And after a time
I found it was only a God-given ladder
By which I could climb.

The Light

CREATURE of wing and wind,
Of ocean-laden breeze,
A spirit of the deep,
A playmate of the seas,
Sweet messenger of wind,
Of foam and froth,
Beating against the light,
Brief ecstasy or wrath :
Creature of wing and wind,
Thy wild free life is gone ;
Across the trackless seas
The light shines on.

Weak creature of the land,
  Wasting thy strength in wrath,
As gull at lighthouse lamp,
  Or in the candle moth:
Creature of soul and mind,
  Thy pulsing life is gone;
But o'er earth's trackless fields
    The light shines on.

The Lonely Pine

HE dwells not with his kindred in the forest;
  In heaven's light divine
In solitude he lives upon the hillside,
    A lonely pine.

Like some great soul predestined for a leader,
    Forlorn, misunderstood,
He came out solitary from his brethren
    Who frolic in the wood.

Erect and vigorous, like some mighty giant,
    Magnificent and fair,
His graceful arms, strong, beautiful, and pliant,
    Flung on the air.

His rugged splendour, kissed by straying sunbeams,
Bathed in the rain;
The listening zephyrs hear him gently murmuring
His litany of pain.

The moon smiles on him in the midnight watches,
The four winds bring him wine,
In solitude he lives upon the hillside,
A lonely pine.

To a Mummy in Canada

GAUNT, weird, and old,
Distant from land and kin,
Once a casket, fair perchance,
A beautiful jewel within.

Long years, dim years ago,
Did you wander by the Nile?
Was Egypt queen below?
Did you sun beneath her smile?

Did you wear a diadem
With a stately Eastern grace?
Some glittering regal gem
Vie in beauty with your face?

Did some ardent lover's kiss
  Find your tender lips all sweet?
Did you dance a minuet
  With your little fairy feet?

Where are you living now?
  With your laughter or your tears,
You lie before me dumb
  In the swaddling bands of years.

Egypt's queens are gone,
  All earthly rulers change;
Yet you are lying here
  In a country unknown, strange.

In the days when you were born,
  When Egypt reigned a queen,
The world was in its morn,
  And ages rolled between.

Fancy

I RISE at the hour of gloaming,
  When the day's work is done,
And tread the golden pathway
  Which leadeth to the sun.

I flee me from my prison
Of labour-welded bars;
I cross the azure ocean
On stepping-stones of stars.

Beneath the bridge of rainbow
I find a long-sought boon;
I climb the silver stairway
That reaches to the moon.

I fly on snowy pinions
Above the salt sea's foam,
I roam in coral mansions
Where mermaids build their home.

I travel fast and care-free,
No money in my purse,
No baggage to impede me,
Around the universe.

The Most of Life

HE makes the most of life
Who rises with the day
To noble, kindly deeds
That help men on their way;

Who humbly fills the place
  Appointed him by God,
The common, daily round
  Men centuries have trod;

Who tastes the joy of love,
  Of living and of gain;
Who strives for some high goal
  With heart and hand and brain;

Who gathers all earth's sweets,
  Brushing aside the stings;
Who grasps the blessings sent
  Ere they have taken wings;

Who finds the discipline
  Of chosen toil his school,
And carves his epitaph
  With brush or pen or tool.

The Old School

THE old school, the dear school,
  Methinks I see it now,
With welcome smiling from its face,
  The sunlight on its brow.

The worn seats, the old desks,
Where each one carved a name,
Some buried in oblivion now,
Some laurel-wreathed with fame.

We played there, we learned there,
Beside the rippling rill,
The old school, the dear school,
The schoolhouse on the hill.

Seashore

BUILDING their castles on the shifting sand,
The happy children toil in merry play,
With phantoms people them, and never dream
To-morrow's waves will wash them all away.

'Tis so men build them castles on the earth,
And heap up gold as children gather sand,
Unmindful that the tide of Time may turn,
And scatter their possessions and their land.

But as tired children, at a parent's call,
Leaving their treasures, faces homeward turn,
So e'en, while grasping fleeting earthly joys,
For greater, richer, lasting things men yearn,

And lay aside their treasures here when called
The Father in the Fatherland to see;
They have but lived their childhood's sunny hours
Upon the seashore of Eternity.

For Eternity

THE hand that moves with ceaseless toil
On the cold marble's shapeless block
Is forming art for years to come
With chisel's cut or hammer's knock;
'Tis not alone for name or fame,
Or palace gallery to adorn,
Nor e'en for gold, but for the eyes
Of generations yet unborn.

When artist fingers grasp the brush,
And on the canvas rude and bare
Trace glowing scenes of earth or sea,
Enduring visions wondrous fair,
Though few may praise, and his poor name
Unlettered and forgotten be,
Those pictures yet shall live to bless;
We paint for all eternity.

The pen that writes the poem sweet,
Or tells of history, science, war,
Records heart tales of life and love,
Speaks to the future evermore,
When pen lies rusted, hand is still,
The echoes ring from sea to sea,
Down the dim corridors of time;
We write for all eternity.

Spring

MY lady comes tripping adown the mountains,
Across the meadows the sweet winds blow,
The sun peeps out of the clouds to see her,
Wherever she passes, the violets grow.

She unbinds her tresses, and zephyrs whisper;
She kisses, and sorrows are left behind;
She bringeth gifts unto every creature,
Worshipped and welcomed by all mankind.

My lady is fair and tall and stately,
Full of laughter and joy and song;
The child of Winter, the bride of Summer,
Holding court with an eager throng.

My lady comes tripping across the meadow;
My lady, to meet her I must go;
The sun peeps out of the clouds to see her,
Wherever she passes, the violets grow.

Years

THE waves roll in under the sunlit skies
Upon the golden beach,
Leaving their trophies at my feet
Or just beyond my reach.

Anon they come and go at no man's beck,
Bearing to me
The salvage from some other human wreck
Far out at sea.

The waves roll in for ever with their spoil,
Bringing to me
The gladness or the sadness and the toil—
My destiny.

A Friend

ONE who will rock-like stand, abiding constant,
Through good repute or ill,
'Neath favour of the world or tribulation,
Spring's glow or winter's chill;

The same in joy and grief, in youth or old age,
Penury or ill-health.
Unchanged in turmoil, pain or degradation,
Prosperity or wealth.

One who will rightly estimate thy virtues,
Cherish the herb of grace,
One who of evil impulse, failure, sinning,
Dare tell thee to thy face;
Who, though all else on earth should spurn, forsake thee,
Will yet with love attend,
Go with thee to the Valley of the Shadow,
Stay close until life's end.

Twin Sisters

ONE was tall and gaunt and dark,
Hair the hue of the raven's coat;
The other was dainty, petite, and fair,
With ever a song in her full, round throat.

One was clad in a garb of black,
The other wore gowns of the rainbow's hues;
One was merry, the other sad;
Yet each exacted from men her dues.

One caused laughter, the other tears,
  Like the sun and showers of an April day;
And people knew, when they met the one,
  That the other was never far away.

Each one brought in her hand a gift—
  Which the most precious gift few could prove;
Men christened the sisters Sorrow and Joy,
  But they both were born from the womb of
    Love.

The Spirits of Music

THEY come and go harmoniously
  Upon the violin's strings,
The seraphim of melody
  With amber-coloured wings.

They float down through the perfumed air
  With healing from the skies,
With all the rainbow-coloured chords,
  Like glorious butterflies.

They carry music in their souls
  To cheer the sons of earth
From territory unexplored,
  From whence they had their birth.

Hope's Golden Sea

I'VE trimmed my sails and glided off
Where some fair islands be,
Where great and noble deeds are done,
Across the golden sea.

Faith's hand upon the helm guides
My vessel through the gales,
Prayers, like sweet-laden zephyrs, blow
Upon the white-winged sails.

Rare spices from those islands waft
Their perfumed breath to me,
As my ship hastens on her way
Across Hope's golden sea.

My Lady's Glove

MY lady dropped her dainty glove
At show or feast,
That man might haste to prove his love
Wrestling with beast.

My dainty lady dropped her glove
Down in the mud;
'Twas handed back on dripping sword
Sheathed in man's blood.

My lady drops her dainty glove
At dance or feast;
I do not rise and hasten forth
To slay some beast;

I tuck the dainty perfumed thing
Into my vest,
And feel her heart is beating there
Against my breast.

A Lake

GIRDLED with mountains
In a cool green glen,
Guarded by forests
Seldom trod of men;

A little mirror
In a lonely place;
I gazed in it and
Straightway saw God's Face.

Polly

POLLY went, with airs and graces,
Tripping through the grass;
Morning glories raised their faces
Just to see her pass.

Dainty blossoms, pink and pearly,
Reached up for her hand,
And night's curtain rolled quite early
From o'er all the land.

The red sun arose to kiss her
On a shining tress,
Zephyrs came, lest they should miss her,
Whispering a caress.

Heaven dropped down diamonds gleaming,
For her, fair and cool,
All the lilies woke from dreaming
On the quiet pool.

The wild birds a-started singing
At her laughter sweet;
Her soft garments set a-ringing
Blue-bells at her feet.

Morning glories raised their faces,
Just to see her pass,
As she went, with airs and graces,
Tripping through the grass.

Repentance

VOICELESS with agony, men beat
In vain upon the past's barred gate;
From our own deeds there's no retreat,
Repentance always comes too late.

The ghosts of days gone by will bear
  Old skeletons among the new
Fair days—you may regret—but ne'er
  A life's repentance can undo.

Blind

TO the beauty of sky and field,
  And many a lovely spot,
Nature and Nature's God,
  Who having eyes see not.

To the higher things of life,
  The richest gifts of earth,
True wealth and happiness,
  Blind—blind from birth.

To good in other men
  Who strive to reach their goals,
To the needs of human hearts,
  To the worth of human souls,

Who scan the fair white page
  And only note the blot,
Who walk through every age
  And having eyes see not.

Pine Trees

THEY tell me tales of wars of old
In the dim days of Indian braves,
When wigwams were man's dwelling-place
And birch canoes rocked on the waves.

They sing me fragrant songs of love,
Heroic deeds when might was right;
Like spires they heavenward point alway
And offer incense in the night.

They murmur songs of constancy,
The sweetness of enduring grace;
Grim storms descend, the floods arise,
Faithful, unmoved, they stand in place.

Their perfumed breath soothes like a balm
The sores won in commercial wild;
They whisper low, sweet lullabies,
As a mother to her child.

A stately choir they chant to me,
A God-built church, grand, free, and wide,
Matins are offered with the sun,
And vespers sung at eventide.

What Does It Matter?

WHAT does it matter if rain be falling?
If clouds are hanging before the blue?
Out of the clouds are angels calling,
And life is glorious, love is true.

What does it matter if days be dreary ?
If nights be curtained about with care ?
We grope awhile, and are sometimes weary ?
The sun and the stars are always there.

Why should we fret at pain or sorrow ?
Or pine when the joys and blossoms fall ?
They will flower again in some bright to-morrow,
For the Father above us loves us all.

So, what does it matter if rain be falling ?
If skies be cloudy instead of fair ?
Behind the clouds are the angels calling,
And God and Heaven are always there.

My Mirrors

WITH youth's vague hope I'd sigh for admiration,
And often stand
To criticise myself in men's creation,
A mirror made by hand.

But one day, all unconscious and unwitting,
I came on a surprise,
I saw a vision of myself reflected ;
The mirrors were your eyes.

Two magic mirrors always satisfying,
Whence beauty never dies,
Nor touch of care, nor hand of time defaces ;
My mirrors are your eyes.

Since I Know You Love Me

BRIGHTER shines the glowing sun
In the sky above me,
Richer coloured bloom the flowers,
Since I know you love me.

Hope has touched with rosy wand
Whatsoe'er betide me;
For I fear no desert path
If you are beside me.

Fickle fortune cannot harm,
Even though she miss me;
I am rich with countless wealth
If you're here to kiss me.

Though possessions spread their wings
It will never grieve me
If I still can hold your hand
And you never leave me.

Brighter shine the moon and stars
In the sky above me,
Fairer is the whole round world
Since I know you love me.

The Best Thing

TAKE the world, but give me love;
Without love the world would die,
Love's the chrysalis in which
All earth's blessings folded lie.

Take the world, its pomp and gains,
Sordid stirring after pelf;
Leave me love, its bliss and pains;
Love is all, Love's God Himself.

To My Love

THE rustling of the leaves, love,
High in the poplar trees,
Is but the whisper of your voice
Borne on the summer breeze;
The sky is very clear, love,
A mirror hung in space,
For I can always see in it
The image of your face.

The lapping of the wavelets
On stones upon the shore
Is but to me your knock, love,
On my heart's open door;

The rushes by the mere-side
A-sighing in the wind
Speak sweetly unto me, love;
I hear your voice behind.

I always feel you near, love,
Though for a little while
I do not see your dear face,
Nor sun beneath your smile;
But everywhere I go, love,
All things my heart rejoice,
For close behind them all, love,
I list and hear your voice.

Spinning

I AM sitting alone in my castle,
Sitting alone to spin,
While To-morrow stands on the threshold
Waiting to come in;

For ever spinning, spinning,
Gloomy or glad, or gay,
But always the strands I handle
Are the golden threads of To-day.

The Church of the Trees

MY church is grand and beautiful
And very good,
Built strongly, inwrought with the sweet
Resinous wood.

Lofty, far o'er my head,
Blue vaulted dome,
Doors open always—there
All may feel at home.

Incense arises daily, fragrant
And divine,
To the high altar, where
God's candles shine.

There sin departs and grace
Descends on me;
To every humble worshipper
That church is free.

Spires point to heaven; a rich
Golden light
Flows through great windows;
Silver lamps by night

Illumine each dim aisle
And solemn feast
Where God's the Preacher,
Architect, and Priest.

The Legions of the Skies

THE traffic of the world
  Is dinning in our ears,
Our gaze is fixed below,
  Eyes dim, perchance, with tears.

Open our ears to hear,
  Open our eyes to see
The legions of the skies,
  Angels of ministry.

From heaven's open door
  They hover on the air,
Unknown, unseen of men,
  Yet they are often there.

The spirit host's the same
  To comfort and uphold,
As in their hours of need,
  Thy chosen saints of old.

Open our eyes and ears,
  Lord make our spirits wise
To know Thy messengers,
  The legions of the skies.

II

SONGS OF THE NIGHT

Night

CLAD in grey gown with softly flowing draperies,
I saw the form of Night
Come forth equipped for carnival of beauty,
Across the hall of light.

Upon her brow she wore a silver crescent
Glowing like monarch's crown,
While regal sparkling gems in rich profusion
Were scattered on her gown.

She was so lovely in her still, cold beauty
That all who saw were dumb;
She trod so gently in grey velvet slippers
That no man heard her come.

Forth through the portal of the golden palace
She went with royal grace,
She carried in her hands a box of treasures,
A smile was on her face.

And many rose to greet her at her coming
With fragrant, virgin breath;
Attendants went before and followed after—
Angels of life and death.

Evening Mist

THE evening mist is falling
Upon the fertile loam;
The boys are loudly calling
The straying cattle home.

The rosy light is paling
On fallow land and lea;
The golden moon is sailing
Across the azure sea.

The evening mist is falling
Upon the ocean foam;
The boys go loudly calling
The straying cattle home.

The western wind is singing
An anthem on the heights;
While angels' hands are bringing
Forth heaven's harbour lights.

The evening mist is falling
On land and ocean foam ;
Night's voice is gently calling
Her wandering children home.

The Spirits of the Night

WHEN Luna lights her silver lamp
And draws her window-blind,
The spirits of the night come forth
And ride upon the wind,
In robes of grey with dusky hair
A-floating out behind.

They scatter perfume as they go
Scouring the hills and dales,
Wrapped in soft veils of mystery
High mounted on the gales,
Leaping the branches of the trees,
Flapping the seaships' sails.

Chasing each other through the air,
Grim phantoms hard to find,
In trailing gowns with dusky locks
A-floating far behind,
The spirits of the night go forth
To ride upon the wind.

Ghosts' Hours

I KNOW not the hour, but they come when the shadows
Are drifting over the world,
When grey mists envelop the hills and the valleys
And the lilies' white banners are furled.

When the sun steppeth down from his throne of pure glory,
On his couch seeketh sleep,
Night lights the lamps of his palace with splendour,
Clouds creep o'er the deep.

When birds fold their feathers on nests and are silent,
Peace broods o'er all things;
Then out of the cavern the Past's hand has chiselled,
The ghosts come on wings.

They come with their burdens of love and rejoicing,
Of pain or of woe—
The young ones, the old ones, the ones I'd forgotten;
But each one I know

And there in the shadows they stand still and show me
Dead things from the grave;
But when the morn lightens they carry their treasures
Again to their cave.

Parted Lovers

OH, love, dear love, come back to me
Across the gulf of years,
And fold me in your arms again
And wipe away my tears.

I stand upon the shore that bounds
The great blue restless sea,
Whose waters lave the sunlit shores
Of some eternity.

With aching heart and weary eyes
And empty outstretched hands,
I watch and wait from day to day
Upon the burning sands.

I wait in utter loneliness,
The sea before me lies,
No sail on the horizon comes
To glad my longing eyes.

The country lieth fair behind,
Tropical glories smile;
To me, dear love, where you are not
Is but a desert isle.

With yearning heart and weeping eyes
And empty outstretched hands
I stand and wait from day to day
Upon the burning sands.

The ocean stretches far and wide,
The wingèd zephyrs blow;
Across that sea where you have gone,
I too am fain to go.

Some day, dear love, a sail will come,
A ship appear for me,
And bear me to that foreign land
Where you now wait for me.

Soul-Mates

AN alien, alone o'er the wide world I roam;
Thine arms were my shelter, thy heart was my home,
Thine eyes were my lodestar whatever betide,
Thy smile was my guerdon, thy love was my pride.

Where'er thou art now, I would be with thee there,
Feel thy kiss on my lips and thy hand on my hair,
Hear thee speak, let thee wipe away all the sad tears,
Lean my head on thy bosom as in bygone years.

Yea, I would be with thee wherever thou art,
Thy presence my glory, my refuge thy heart;
For heaven without thee no heaven would be,
And hell would be heaven if thou wert with me.

My Heart

THE lowly dwelling where you lived
In regal state
Is overhung with webs of time,
Empty and desolate.

The moss-green mould of years has grown
Upon the thatch,
The rusty hinges creak, and stiff
The well-worn latch.

Rooms echo your dear voice, your step
Sounds on the stairs;
And everywhere I feel your arms,
Your love, your prayers.

The fragrance of your presence fills
The silent space;
In every mirror on the walls
I see your face.

And there I mourn in widowhood
Alone, bereft;
No other foot shall ever cross
The door you left.

Departed

THE rustle of her garments
Sweeps through the deserted hall;
The creaking stairs re-echo
The sound of her light footfall.

Her gowns hang limp in the wardrobe
With a hint of her nameless grace;
Her image smiles from the mirror
So wont to reflect her face.

The little empty slippers
Beside the old fireplace,
The jewels that shone on her fingers,
The dainty, filmy lace,

The bit of work in her basket,
  The books on the table seem
Such proof of her living presence
  That her absence appears a dream.

Behind the curtain of silence
  Her voice lurks yet in the room,
Her spirit lingers among us,
  Though her body lies in the tomb.

Love and I

WE travelled a long road together,
  Love and I;
But 'twas pleasant every weather,
  Rough or dry.

For he always kept beside me,
  Held my hand,
Up and down the hills and valleys
  Of the land.

Now the way is very lonely;
  In a dream,
One day he went before me
  O'er a stream.

But I know that he still loves me,
And I think
He is waiting for me somewhere
Near the brink.

The Poppy Field

WHAT matter though I be here
And my love in a foreign land?
At night we meet in the poppy field
And sit hand in hand.

I rest my head on his shoulder,
For the parting will come soon;
The poppies are nodding around us
In the light of the silver moon.

We whisper in perfumed stillness
And hear the dewdrops fall,
Till down through the garden of silence
The voices of sunbeams call.

Death's Bride

WHEN night's grey banner overhead was floating,
Embroidered with new moon and stars for crest,
You glided up the stairway of the darkness
From the dim quiet country where you rest.

You came to know if he who swore he loved you
Had found another bride,
For even in the grave it caused you anguish
To miss him from your side.

He comes no more to heap his violets on you,
Where the soft south winds stir,
You are the bride of Death; he bears his roses
And bridal flowers to her.

Affinity

MY love may in the cold earth lie,
I sleep in some deep pond;
Unto his bosom I will fly
When Death redeems his bond.

Though continents between us roll
And seas be piled on seas,
My soul would seek and find his soul
Through countless centuries.

The City of Silence

A CITY lieth four-square, walled around,
Low houses built of earth and emerald sod,
Green banners wave down the long, quiet streets
Illumined by the silver lamps of God.

They toil not in that city, neither spin;
No whir of wheels nor smoking factories come;
They clamour not for bread nor slave for gold;
Rich, poor, high, lowly, mingle there, all dumb.

The Unknown

LAST evening, when the moon was rising
Among the silver stars,
You rose and trod the unknown pathway
Behind the future's bars.

You took your leave so gently, dear heart,
Silently as the snow;
We who watched with love beside you
Never heard you go.

Did your earthborn footsteps falter?
Felt you any fear?
Was there some one waiting for you?
Is God's heaven near?

Evening

EVENING in trailing purple gown
Entered the golden house of day,
Let down the curtain of the night,
Laid out a dream-embroidered gown,
Put toys away.

Queries

DID we not drink at some celestial fountain
In some perennial distant fields of youth ?
Climbed we not easily the purple mountain,
Lofty and sun-clad, of eternal truth ?

Did we not robe ourselves in golden vesture
And soar unhindered through the fields of day ?
Had we not wings and angel face and gesture
In some dim other country far away ?

Are not our memories ever striving after
Those things above the path on which we're set ?
Do we not hear through daily words and laughter
Some faint strains of the music we forget ?

Is not the love that renders earth immortal
A pledge of life that was, of life to be ?
Shall we not meet beyond death's rainbow portal
And wander hand in hand eternally ?

I Miss You

I MISS you, O my darling, when the shadows
Fall on the golden wheat ;
And when the eager crowds pass in the city,
I listen for your feet,

The sun in rosy splendour rises daily,
But brings me no delight;
The fairest gifts of all the world allure not:
I mourn for you at night.

The sweetest voice that thrills gives me no comfort,
For though the songs I miss,
The music of your voice, my own beloved, 's
Heaven's and earth's best bliss.

The Portal of Death

DOWN to the door
Of a loathsome cave,
Where the sun enters not,
Where the cypress trees wave,

The multitude comes,
Rich, poor, young, old,
With hearts aflame,
With their bags of gold,

With the pride of life,
With the lust of greed,
With their broken toys,
With an earthworn creed,

The valorous soul
  Who honour craves
Meets the baby's smile
  Where the cypress waves.

With weighted feet,
  With bated breath,
They haste them down
  To the portal of death.

A Spirit Voice

I AM near you, O beloved, in the watches of the night,
I am standing by your pillow, all clothed in spotless white;
I may not pull aside the veil which hides me from your eyes,
But I am watching o'er you with the wisdom of the skies.

'Tis but a little journey, love, from earth's last fleeting breath
To where I am so glad and free beyond the bourne of death,
Beyond the sorrow and the sin, the bonds of time and space;
But I often come to help you, love, and gaze upon your face.

Let not your heart grow faint, dear love, for I am
near you yet,
The cycles of the years move on, but I will not
forget;
And when your work is finished too, and voice and
pen are dumb,
To guide you to God's home above, dear love, I'll
surely come.

Afterwards

WHEN the dark Form who guards the door of
mystery
Opes it for me,
Shall I go forth on spirit wings of beauty
At liberty
To soar through sweet, illimitable spaces,
To see again dear friends with angel faces,
And visit God's celestial, secret places,
Where treasures be?

Shall I, from planet unto planet flying,
Rest for awhile
Where golden rings and sunshine never dying
Disclose no guile?

Swift as the wingèd winds onward aspire
From cloud to cloud, from world to world mount higher
Until at last I hear the heavenly choir
And see God's smile ?

The Spirit Host

HARK ! the whir of rolling chariots
Driving on the roaring wind,
Earth's unfettered host ascending,
Some celestial land to find.

Or some lonely spirit wending
Its untrammelled flight, to see
Its belovèd mortal soul-mate
In a lower destiny.

Empty hands we reach out, yearning
Mutely o'er the gulf of death ;
And our hearts grow sick with longing
As we list with bated breath.

Bitter days we grope in anguish,
For our eyes are dim of sight ;
But the spirit host encampeth
Round about us in the night.

They are near us, faith can doubt not;
They are here, but we are blind;
Lo, we hear their chariots driving
O'er the pathway of the wind,

Her Bridegroom

SHE is waiting for her lover,
Who will never come again
From the low bed where he lieth in the deep;
Where the corals and the pearls
Are encrusted in his curls,
And the waves have lullabied him sound asleep.

She is waiting for her lover,
Who will never come again,
She is waiting for his kisses on her face,
She is watching at the door,
But he cometh nevermore
From the siren who fast holds him in embrace.

She is waiting for her lover,
She is waiting year by year,
She is listening for the sound of wedding bell;
He's the bridegroom of the sea,
No divorce can set him free,
For the Ocean's hand has rung his marriage knell.

She is waiting for her husband,
Who will never come to her,
For the bridal ring and newly furnished room;
But some vaulted ocean cave
At whose door the waters rave
Is the house of her who lured him to his doom.

Expectation

TELL me not my love has left me, that I'll see his face no more,
The sweet music of his footstep will not ring upon the floor,
That I will not see the glory of his coming at the door.

Tell me not that he forgets me in some heaven far away,
That my image is not with him every hour of every day,
That he waits not for the moments when I too shall come to stay.

When Death strikes off my shackles, gives me pinions like a dove,
I shall find him, I shall see him, I shall clasp him up above
In the land of life immortal, in the home of perfect love.

My Love

I LAID her to rest among the lilies,
Among the lilies, my love so fair,
Where soft winds whisper a sweet song daily,
And violets nestle about her hair;
Where showers of the snowy bridal blossoms
Are casting their fragrance on the air.

I laid her to rest by purple mountain,
Beneath the shelter of God's blue dome;
Wrapped in sunshine I laid her sleeping
Where the bells chime over her peaceful home;
And when I am sad, alone or weary,
To her lily-clad, low, green house I come.

To One Above

MY ears list to the sound of words and laughter
Dimly as in a maze;
My spirit hears your voice in the hereafter
Through endless golden days.

My lonely footsteps on earth's pathway falter
In weariness and sin;
My spirit walks with you—love cannot alter—
The city gates within.

My body here abides in doubt and danger,
Sweet hopes my spirit bear
Where I no longer feel I am a stranger,
For you are living there.

Some Day

I DO not know, dear love, the hour
I'll meet again with thee,
So over all the hills of life
I'm climbing wearily.

I keep my eyes upon the stars
And hope that thou canst see,
For some day on some Pisgah height
I'll meet again with thee.

Immortal Love

WHY did you leave me, Love?
Why did you leave me?
While you were at my side
Nothing could grieve me.

Did you go far away?
Love, will you never
Come where I watch and wait
For you for ever?

Ah yes, I know you would
  Come to me, rather
Than into glory go
  Farther and farther.

Empty the world to me
  Since we were riven;
And you want me, I know,
  Even in heaven.

The Old Trysting-Place

THEY say that he is dead; I know—
  I've kissed his cold still lips in death,
And seen him laid where roses blow
  Upon him with their fragrant breath.

But still at the old trysting-place
  Where the stream murmurs to the flowers,
He comes from some celestial space
  At the same old familiar hours.

Out of unnumbered souls set free,
  My soul would know and answer him;
I talk to him—I cannot see
  Him, just because my sight is dim.

To the old trysting-place I go,
Oppressed with loneliness or care;
I cannot touch him, but I know
My sweetheart surely meets me there.

A Graveyard

I WANDERED one night at cockcrow
Through a graveyard weird and still,
Reading the names on the tombstones
In the moonlight clear and chill.

A white slab graven "Marah"
Marked the burial-place of youth;
Her shroud was spun of golden threads,
A web of faith and truth.

A marvellous mausoleum
All carved stood up at the head
Of the spot where sweet aspirations
And denied desires lay dead.

There were trodden, unnamed, low mounds
Grown green with the mould of years,
Where worldly hopes and ambitions
Were buried with sighs and tears.

There were graves of many a talent
That starving neglect had slain,
And fair plots covered with lilies
That had sprung from the graves of pain.

There were tombs of friends, and sorrows
A-blossom with Time's fresh flowers,
And graves of many to-morrows
Watched o'er by the ghosts of hours.

Death

AN uninvited visitor,
Unseen of mortal sight,
He rides in sable garments dressed,
Upon the wings of night.

He comes, as an unwelcome guest,
To house or banquet-place;
He bears a sickle in his hand,
A mask upon his face.

He creeps with sombre silence in,
He's no respect of kings;
Bats and mould are in his train,
And worms and creeping things.

He asks and no man may deny,
To slay is his delight;
He rides in sable raiment clad
Upon the wings of night.

My Bird of Hope

MY palace is turned to a prison
In which I pine alone,
For my bird of radiant plumage
Has out of the window flown.

Was the palace always a prison?
So fair it seemed to be
When my bird perched by the hearthstone
And sang sweet songs to me.

But now I feel dreary, weary,
Despairful and alone,
For my bird of beautiful plumage
Has out of the window flown.

The Fountain of Tears

A WELL-WORN path o'er the mountain leads
To a spring in the vale of tears,
The stones grown smooth from the pilgrims' feet
Who have trodden thereon for years.

To that well they come from the north and south
They gather from west and east;
With empty pitchers they come to draw
For funeral or wedding feast.

The rich, the learned, the poor, the weak,
The weary, bereft of joy;
Sweet maid and matron and lone old age
Meet the child with his broken toy.

They come and they go, a countless throng,
As the eons of time roll by;
Their vessels they lower that they may drink,
For that fountain is never dry.

The Soul of the Murderer

LAST night I met a skeleton
Travelling from coast to coast,
With haggard mien, sad, glaring eyes,
A weird and wandering ghost.

And from his garments there dripped down
A glowing crimson trail,
As on the roaring hurricane
He poured his dismal wail.

"Where is my peace of mind?" he cried,
"I search from Pole to Pole,
But there is none may shrive again
My God-forsaken soul.

"I seek to bathe me in the streams,
I writhe me in the mud;
I throw my garments to the wind,
Yet I am clothed with blood.

"I linger 'neath the tropic heat,
I plunge me in the snow;
But lo! I leave a bloody trail
Where'er my footsteps go.

"I know no rest by day nor night,
I run from Pole to Pole;
But no man ever can remove
The bloodstain from my soul.

"All through the blackness of the night
Across the driven snow
I wander, wander everywhere,
With blood-marks as I go.

"I seek to wash me in the sea
  Or drown me in the flood;
I throw my garments to the wind,
  Yet I am clothed with blood.

"What matters wealth, what matters fame,
  What matters prospects fair,
When up and down the universe
  My spirit wanders bare?

"Save for the vestment dyed in blood
  I cannot fling away,
I cannot live, I cannot die,
  I cannot hope nor pray."

My Babies

THEY wandered into the poppy field
  At the close of the day;
They wandered into the poppy field,
  Tired out with play;

My little children whom I love
  Went from my side to roam;
Three wandered into the poppy field,
  But only two came home.

Astarte

CLAD in silver,
Gossamer veil,
Beautiful, stately,
Cold and pale.

Nightly, lightly,
Over the globe,
Trailing her star-decked
Silver robe.

Queen of the night,
Queen of the sea,
Regal, silver-robed,
Astarte.

The Sea

THE shadows of night are falling
Over the dark blue sea
And voices are calling, calling
Out of the depths to me;

Voices of those who languish,
Dying in sore despair,
Echoes of fear and anguish,
Whispers of song and prayer.

Meanings of those who perish
With coffin and shroud of waves,
Far from the homes they cherish,
Sinking to nameless graves.

Voices are calling, calling
Out of the depths to me,
While shadows of night are falling
Over the deep blue sea.

Parting

I DO not know, dear heart, if I may ever
Come down the shining road
Which wanders on the green banks of the river
In God's divine abode.

I do not know if I can climb cloud mountains,
Or leave the city fair,
The gates of pearl, gold streets, and rippling fountains,
To tread upon the air.

I do not know what duties will betide me
In that life strange and new;
But if God lets me, with my love to guide me,
I will be near to you.

My Sailor Boy

THEY say my sailor boy is dead,
My son so strong and glad;
But through the wild wind's moans at night
I hear my firstborn lad.

I hear my darling call aloud,
"Oh, mother, come to me
Where I am lying still and cold
Beneath the deep blue sea."

My sailor boy, my bonnie lad,
With blue eyes full of glee,
Who left me for his only love—
The love of the blue sea.

The sweet, round limbs of baby days
I used to wash with care
Are laved by waters cool, and laid
To rest without a prayer.

The green waves toss the golden locks
With fingers cold and cruel,
That my hand loved to smooth, curl, kiss,
Before he went to school.

White foam-crests kiss his pallid brow,
My sailor boy so proud;
A hard rock is his pillow now,
The seaweed forms his shroud.

In the dead silence of the night
I hear him call to me,
And hasten to his empty cot,
My darling, in the sea.

The Broken Lute

THE singer's lute was mute, for God
Sent down and broke the strings;
All night he writhed upon the sod
Weeping unuttered things.

God sent the angel Israfel
To earth on music's wings;
He took the lute God had made mute
And mended all the strings.

When the enraptured singer's hand
Swept the loved chords once more,
He found the wailing melody
Was sweeter than of yore.

The Spirits of the Years

DOWN in the glowing embers,
Like fire in a wizard's cave,
Ghosts weird and lean come trooping
Out of the Past's deep grave.

Spirits of grief and pleasure,
Of love, hope, and desire,
They come and go like vapours
In the midst of the glowing fire.

Beckoning or upbraiding,
Mocking, alluring, dumb,
Gaily in fantasy dancing
With the ghosts of the years to come.

Naked and sad or smiling,
Bedecked with flowers and tears,
They glide around in the firelight,
The spirits of the years.

The River of Sleep

THERE is a river, a beautiful river,
Bright fairies its banks have trod,
Myriads of poppies a-glowing and blowing
Are springing from emerald sod.

Luna's lamp and her million night-lights
Illuminate the scene,
As onward plodding, through poppies nodding,
The river rolls between.

Castles and gardens and wonderful visions
Upon its borders grow ;
Glad bells ringing, sweet voices singing,
Are heard when soft winds blow.

Serenely sweeping, safe in its keeping,
Enchanted vessels glide,
Onward plodding through poppies nodding
" Good night " on either side.

Little Love

OH little Love, oh little Love,
When in my arms you lay,
A gift divine I claimed as mine,
I thought you came to stay ;
Oh, little Love, do you miss me,
So very far away ?

Oh little Love, oh little Love,
Where have you gone to smile ?
Oh, who will fold you in fond arms,
And all your wants beguile ?
Will angels hover o'er your cot,
To rock you for a while ?

Oh little Love, oh little Love,
  Why have you gone from me ?
A-sailing in a golden boat
  On the high, azure sea,
Through rainbows, past the sun and stars,
  Away, away from me ?

The Palace of Tears

OF iris-hued marble
  A great palace rears
Its many domed towers
  O'er the vale of the years ;
Its beauty to many
  Beholders endears.

A palace enchanted,
  Façaded with fears,
Guarded by dragons
  With ominous leers ;
Silent, deserted,
  Haunted by years.

Spirits walk through it
  In long trailing white,
Searching dim corridors,
  Holding for light
Great blazing torches
  At dead of the night.

For in that palace,
That palace so old,
Treasure is buried,
Uncounted, untold,
That no man wots of—
A fortune of gold.

Down in the garden
Lie children asleep,
Little ones sit on the doorstep
And weep,
Longing the rainbows
Above them to keep.

Whence squalor debases,
Prosperity sears,
Where labour ennobles,
From fêtes and from biers;
Come old and come young
To the Palace of Tears.

Echoes

WHEN we wander through the halls of the hereafter,
Will memory find
The life which, when we went to earth from dreamland,
We left behind?

Is not the music of surpassing beauty
Floating across life's sea
An echo of the golden harps we fingered
In some Eternity ?

Are the sweet thoughts like white doves downward drifting
Born in some land above ?
Whence, but from God, can come a gift so Godlike
As an immortal love ?

Did we not live long ere this fleshly garment
Our spirit shrouds ?
Did we not trail through starry fields of glory
O'er fleecy clouds ?

The Toll of the Sea

DEAD ships that breast no more
The crested gales,
But low at anchor ride
White folded sails.

Of passengers, a silent
Spectral crowd;
Cabins their sepulchre,
The foam their shroud.

The young life and the old
From countries wide,
The captain with his crew,
The groom and bride.

Untrimmed cargo, cordage,
Rusted tools,
Fine linen, purple, silk,
Gold, silver, jewels.

Rudderless boats, their pride
By cruel waves pricked;
The wizard of the sea,
The ghostly derelict.

Lone houses on the shore,
Poor broken lives,
Babies fatherless,
Husbandless wives.

Hours leaden, tear-dimmed vision,
Vacant rooms,
Women sore wailing
Over empty tombs.

Invisible

THEY are hovering o'er us, those spirits immortal,
Beings from an infinite space;
They fly to us swiftly from Heaven's high portal
On errands of grace.

Legions and legions are soaring around us
And bidding us rise,
Shake off the shackles of sin which have bound us,
To aim for the skies.

Luring us homeward to all those who love us,
If we will but list,
The towers of the City are looming above us
Enveloped in mist.

Rich colours, all glowing from jewelled foundation,
A calm eventide,
Stream down on each God-seeking soul in each nation
Through gates open wide.

Muffled the music to ears that are earthborn;
But listening, anon
We catch a refrain of the singing at day-dawn
Alluring us on.

Godward and homeward, the angels are stirring
To seek lasting things;
When the wind bloweth, we hear the soft whirring
Of their snowy wings.

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Canadian canticles

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